

**Washington, D.C.** - David Price launches the Democracy Assistance Commission

Congressman David Dreier (R-CA), Chairman of the House Democracy Assistance Commission, and Congressman David Price (D-NC), Ranking Democratic Member, announced today that the House Democracy Assistance Commission has selected the parliaments of Georgia, Macedonia, Kenya, East Timor and Indonesia for legislative assistance programs in 2006.

Dreier and Price said that the 16-member Commission intended to host delegations from the five partner parliaments in the United States in January 2006. The Commission will also send Members of Congress and congressional staff to each selected country in 2006 to conduct legislative strengthening programs with each parliament.

"These parliaments are working to become independent, effective institutions in a democratic system," Chairman Dreier said. "While they vary greatly in their stage of development, all of the selected parliaments requested access to the experience and expertise of House Members and our staffs. The Members of the Commission look forward to working personally with our foreign counterparts to help them build stronger democratic legislatures."

"Having worked with a similar parliamentary assistance program a decade ago, I know this effort can generate tremendous goodwill in the countries we assist," said Price, who participated in the activities of the House's Frost-Solomon Task Force in the early nineties. "Since its founding, the United States has championed the development of democracy everywhere. That work has arguably never been more important than it is today."

The Commission released its 2005 annual report today, which includes the findings from a six-month study of foreign parliaments, as well as the proposed activities of the Commission in 2006. The report is available on the Commission's new website.

The Commission was created by the House of Representatives (H. Res. 135) on March 14, 2005, to strengthen parliaments in emerging democracies. Central to the Commission's work will be the provision of technical expertise enhancing accountability, transparency, legislative

independence, and government oversight in those parliaments. The Commission will bring Members of Congress together with their colleagues in the aforementioned parliaments to help strengthen those institutions.

In addition to the five initially selected parliaments, the Commission is considering undertaking parliamentary strengthening programs in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq and Ukraine, and may consider an additional five parliaments in 2006.

Visit <http://www.price.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=27446> for more background on Price's involvement with HDAC.

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